



EPA ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF ADDITIONAL SAMPLING FOR LEAD AND WORK COMPLETED TO SECURE BEACH AND SEAWALL AT RARITAN BAY SITE

Community Update

June 2009

The NJDHSS, in cooperation with ATSDR, has determined that portions of the Raritan Bay Slag site pose a Public Health Hazard and recommend restricted access to the seawall and a beach in Laurence Harbor and a jetty in Sayreville.

QUESTIONS? Please Contact

Community Involvement Coordinator

Pat Seppi
212-637-3679
seppi.pat@epa.gov

On-Scene Coordinator:

Andrew Confortini
732-906-6827
confortini.andrew@epa.gov

Visit EPA's Web site at:

www.epa.gov/region02/superfund

DEFINITIONS:

Removal Action - a short-term action taken under the Superfund Program to address a release or threat of release of a hazardous substance that may present an imminent and substantial danger to the public health or welfare, or the environment.

Slag - a by-product of processing rocks to extract minerals such as lead.

INITIAL SAMPLING EFFORT

EPA has been evaluating the Raritan Bay Slag site for a Superfund Removal Action. Samples were collected at the site in September 2008. The sampling included the collection of soil, sediment, water, biological, and waste samples along the seawall in Laurence Harbor, the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet, and the beaches and park area situated near these two locations. Analytical results indicate that significantly elevated levels of lead and other heavy metals are present in the soils, beach sand, and sediment, in and around both the seawall in Laurence Harbor and the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet. Lead was also identified on the first beach between the western end of the seawall and the first jetty in Old Bridge Waterfront Park. Based on the results of the sampling, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) in conjunction with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), has determined that portions of the Raritan Bay Slag site pose a Public Health Hazard and recommend restricted access to the seawall and a beach in Laurence Harbor and a jetty in Sayreville.

The results of the biota sampling have confirmed the presence of lead in clams, mussels, forage fish and sea lettuce. The potential impact of the concentrations identified are currently under evaluation by marine biologists.

ADDITIONAL SAMPLING EFFORT

In late April 2009, EPA conducted additional beach and sediment sampling along additional sections of shoreline. Approximately 300 soil, sediment and water samples were collected. The results obtained from this event are pending final evaluation. EPA also collected samples of battery casing material from two Old Bridge beaches and the western jetty along Cheesequake Creek Inlet. The concentrations identified range from 1.7 to 170 ppm. The results confirmed lead levels to be very low.

In late April 2009, EPA and its marine team conducted extensive sonar and dive investigations within the Cheesequake Creek Inlet. The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether slag material from the jetty was present within the waterway and collect sediment samples if present. The investigation did not identify

any large pieces of slag material within the waterway. The investigation determined that much of the inlet bottom was primarily gravel covered and free of fine sediments which could be sampled. Where sediments were observed, samples were collected. The results confirm the presence of an elevated lead level at one location along the base of the jetty.

In late April 2009, EPA and its contractors completed the installation of a security fence prohibiting access to the western jetty along the Cheesequake Creek Inlet in Sayreville. This work involved the installation of 425 linear feet of chain link fence.

In mid-June 2009, EPA and its contractors completed the installation of the chain-link fence along the Old Bridge Waterfront Park beach, park area and along Rt. 35. Installation of the fence and appropriate signage was completed during this same time-frame.

In April 2009, the Raritan Bay Slag site was proposed for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is a list of the worst hazardous waste sites that have been identified by Superfund. Sites are only put on the list after they have been scored using the Hazard Ranking System, and have been subjected to public comment. Any site on the NPL is eligible for cleanup using Superfund Trust money. The comment period for the Raritan Bay Slag site ended on June 8, 2009. The determination on whether the site will be finalized is pending and we should have an answer within the next few months.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND INFO:

The Raritan Bay Slag site is located in the Laurence Harbor section of Old Bridge and in Sayreville along the Raritan Bay. The overall site spans approximately 1.3 miles in length and consists of the waterfront area between Margaret's Creek and the area just beyond the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet. The portion of the site that is in Laurence Harbor is part of what is now called Old Bridge Waterfront Park. Lead slag, reportedly in the form of blast furnace pot bottoms, was deposited along the beachfront in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The other portion of the site that is in Sayreville is located on, and adjacent to, the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet. The slag on the jetty is similar in appearance to that which is present on the seawall. Crushed battery casings are also evident on the jetty. The Raritan Bay Slag site is part of a larger effort which includes the area around Margaret's Creek, an area in which the NJDEP discovered lead-contaminated material.

US EPA Region 2 has designated an Ombudsman as a point-of-contact for community concerns and questions about the federal Superfund program in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. To support this effort, the Agency has established a 24-hour, toll-free number that the public can call to request information, express their concerns or register complaints about Superfund. The ombudsman for EPA's Region 2 office is:

George H. Zachos
US EPA, Region 2
2890 Woodbridge Avenue, MS-211
Edison, New Jersey
(732) 321-6621
Toll free (888) 283-7626